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# Concluding Comments

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## Emerging Issues

This Master Plan represents the Joint Committee's best recommendations for enhancing California's educational system to better meet students' current and future needs. The report is based on our current understanding of contemporary and anticipated circumstances in our state, the nation, and the world. Much change will occur in the years ahead, so this document should be regarded as dynamic, and revisited as appropriate to accommodate future circumstances and needs as they arise. Therefore, a systematic structure for review and revision of the Master Plan for Education should regularly be undertaken by the Legislature. We recommend that such a review occur on a decennial basis. While this Master Plan should undergo a comprehensive review every ten years, the Joint Committee further believes that interim reviews, more limited in scope should occur every three-to-five years following the Plan's adoption. Those interim reviews should focus on monitoring the implementation of key recommendations contained in this Plan, reviewing and acting on the studies called for in this Plan, and determining whether emerging trends in the state warrant revisions to the Plan prior to its comprehensive review. We therefore recommend the following:

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### Recommendation 56

**The Legislature should create a joint committee to perform a comprehensive review of this California Master Plan for Education at least every ten years from the date of submission of this report.**

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Probably one of the most startling and compelling trends of our time is the ever-increasing pace of change. Because of the potential impact that rapid change could have on the success of the implementation of this Master Plan, we further recommend that emerging issues – many of which this committee has identified as presenting potentially major impact on public education, but which, because of their dynamic nature, cannot yet be explored or understood sufficiently for us to reach conclusions or make recommendations – be studied by the Legislature on a more frequent basis than decennially:

**Recommendation 56.1 – In light of the rapidly changing times and emerging conditions we are experiencing, the Legislature should create a joint committee no more than five years from the date of submission of this report, for the purpose of reviewing especially important, emerging issues, including:**

- The potential impact of electronically-mediated and distance learning on the effectiveness of teaching and learning, as well as on the variety of learning options from among which Californians might choose to pursue their interests in acquiring new knowledge and new skills;
- The variety of formats in which textbooks and other instructional materials could be available and the possibilities that these formats could offer for assuring that every learner enrolled in a public education institution has access to current information and learning support;
- The findings of research on effective ways to create and sustain small learning communities and diverse learning environments, that may suggest new ways to structure and finance public schools; and
- Future governance styles that might cultivate educational leadership, and collaborative governance arrangements that could improve the effectiveness and seamlessness of California's education system, including an examination of current management practices and collective bargaining in the context of teaching and learning.

**Recommendation 56.2 – The legislative joint committee to be empanelled five years from the adoption of this report, pursuant to the preceding recommendation, should further examine, and when appropriate take action on, the implementation of key recommendations of this Plan to ensure that sufficient progress is being made toward the goals of this Plan. These recommendations include at least the following:**

- Elimination of the use of teachers with emergency permits, particularly in low-performing schools;
- Progress in elimination of the use of multi-track year-round school schedules that have fewer calendar days of instruction;
- Development of 'opportunities for teaching and learning' indicators for inclusion in the Student Accountability Report Card and use by the Superintendent of Public Instruction;
- Review of the findings of various studies called for in this Plan, including those of optimal organization for county offices of education and school districts, and the cost of funding essential components of a quality education system; and
- Progress in implementing a comprehensive educational data system.

**Recommendation 56.3 – The Legislative Analyst should, on an annual basis, review the operations of the California Postsecondary Education Commission and the California Education Commission, to determine the extent to which, and the effectiveness with which, they are meeting the functions assigned to them, and should report the findings of that review to the Legislature during the annual state budget process. Within these reviews, the Legislative Analyst should assess the feasibility of merging the California Education Commission and the California Postsecondary Education Commission into one entity with two divisions to better serve the well-being of all California education.**

**Recommendation 57.4 - The Legislative Analyst should annually review the foregoing, as well as other, emerging issues to determine their potential impact on successful implementation of this Master Plan and report to the Legislature any issues which appear to warrant further analysis and/or policy action.**

This call for interim reviews is also driven by this Plan's focus on student achievement and by its commitment to both equity and accountability in the provision of high quality educational experiences for all students enrolled in California's schools, colleges, and universities. With all Californians supporting these basic principles, we will be able to provide more educational access, quality, and success to more students than ever before – a goal that is uniquely Californian and to which we can all aspire.

### *Summary*

This Plan is ambitious in its scope, and its full implementation will require a sustained commitment on the part of all Californians and substantial investment from the State, local communities, and business. This Plan cannot be implemented without the engagement of our entire state and all of its component parts. Parents, students, educators, policymakers, community-based organizations, and employers each and all have a responsibility to support quality teaching and learning and must both accept and fulfill their respective responsibilities for implementation of this Plan. No other state has undertaken what is being proposed in this Master Plan for Education: creation of a framework to guide educational policy for all aspects of education, from early childhood education to postsecondary education levels, driven by an uncompromised commitment to promoting student achievement and the ability to learn for a lifetime. We reject the notion that public education can serve only a proportion of its learners well and that student achievement must be distributed along a 'normal curve.' We believe that virtually every student can and should be assisted to realize her/his potential to become a learner for life, and to meet (or even exceed) high standards of achievement. An education system that remains focused on helping learners achieve this potential must also be focused on continual improvement.

Broad participation in the development of this Master Plan has been sought to ensure that it incorporates the best of what all Californians believe they need from their education system in order to ensure a society that celebrates its diversity as a strength to be cherished and cultivated. We have sought to anticipate the learning needs of Californians 20 years into the future, to guide ourselves in making wise decisions today that will increase the likelihood that California will remain a world leader. We hope and believe that our collective commitment to adopt and implement this Master Plan will restore all of California's educational sectors to positions of prominence in promoting student learning.

Because learning takes place within the context of learners' lives, the needs to which our education system must respond will inevitably change over time. Today's instruction is not limited to use of slates and chalkboards, as it was in the past; and it is reasonable to conclude that instruction will not be limited to printed textbooks and face-to-face interaction between teachers and learners in the future. The changes generated by science, technology, and use of information

are increasingly generating new opportunities and new tools for workers, learners, teachers, and researchers alike. At the same time, California's increasingly diverse population is creating opportunities for new community linkages and opening new paths for students to become engaged citizens. The committee recognizes this fact and recommends that this Master Plan for Education be reviewed comprehensively at least every ten years, and be modified, as necessary, to ensure a continued focus on learners within California's education system. There is an inherent tension between the capacity of educational institutions to adequately respond to the unique needs of individual students and the capacity of the public policymaking process to shape institutional structures and practices that are flexible, while also being accountable to the general public. Resolution of this tension can be best accomplished by actively seeking the input of Californians throughout the state during each subsequent review of this Plan.